

Message Text

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ANKARA FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: NATO, MNUC

SUBJECT: PINCUS AND BURT ARTICLES ON ERW

1. FOLLOWING ARE TEXTS OF ARTICLES BY WALTER PINCUS
AND RICHARD BURT ON ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS WHICH
APPEARED IN MARCH 28 EDITIONS OF THE WASHINGTON POST
AND THE NEW YORK TIMES RESPECTIVELY. PLEASE PASS
URGENTLY TO DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER.

2. BEGIN TEXT(UNCLASSIFIED): „U.S. PULLS BACK FROM
NATO NEUTRON WEAPONS DISCUSSIONS" BY WALTER PINCUS.
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THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION ABRUPTLY CHANGED COURSE
LAST WEEK AND CALLED OFF NEGOTIATIONS IN BRUSSELS WITH
ITS EUROPEAN NATO ALLIES SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO
COURT THEIR PUBLIC SUPPORT OF US PRODUCTION OF NEUTRON
ARTILLERY SHELLS AND MISSILE WARHEADS.

ALLIED GOVERNMENTS, ON WHOSE SOIL THE NEUTRON WEAPONS
WOULD BE DEPLOYED, HAVE BEEN SKITTISH ABOUT GIVING
OPEN BACKING TO THE CONTROVERSIAL NEW GENERATION OF
TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS BECAUSE OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION

TO THEM THAT HAS DEVELOPED WITHIN THEIR COUNTRIES.

PRESIDENT CARTER HAS MADE IT CLEAR UP TO NOW THAT HE WOULD NOT ORDER PRODUCTION UNLESS HE COULD COUNT ON PUBLIC NATO GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF HIS DECISION.

ALTHOUGH SOME ADMINISTRATION SOURCES MAINTAINED YESTERDAY THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS NOT YET MADE HIS FINAL GO-AHEAD DECISION, THE TALKS WHICH HAD BEEN UNDER WAY FOR SEVERAL WEEKS WERE BASED ON A PRELIMINARY WHITE HOUSE DETERMINATION THAT A PRODUCTION ORDER WOULD BE MADE BY MID-APRIL.

"THAT DECISION HAD BEEN MADE SOME TIME AGO," ONE SOURCE SAID YESTERDAY, "BUT NOW WE ARE IN A HOLDING PATTERN."

A FEW GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS INTERPRETED THE TALKS' CANCELLATION LAST WEEK AS A SIGN THE PRESIDENT HAS REVERSED HIMSELF AND IS NOW LEANING AGAINST A NEUTRON GO-AHEAD. OTHERS, HOWEVER, SAID CARTER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAS ONLY MADE "A DECISION TO DELAY THE DECISION," IN THE WORDS OF ONE.

NUCLEAR SHELLS AND WARHEADS NOW DEPLOYED IN EUROPE DESTROY TARGETS SUCH AS TANKS AND FORTIFICATIONS PRIMARILY THROUGH HEAT AND BLAST.

PROPOSED NEUTRON 8-INCH ARTILLERY SHELLS AND LANCE MISSILE WARHEADS, ON THE OTHER HAND, CUT DOWN BLAST AND HEAT AND ARE DESIGNED TO KILL OR INCAPACITATE ENEMY TROOPS PRIMARILY BY RADIATION.

PROPOSERS OF THE WEAPONS SAY THEY WOULD BE MORE CREDIBLE DETERRENTS IN EUROPE THAN THOSE NOW DEPLOYED BECAUSE THEY WOULD CAUSE LESS COLLATERAL DAMAGE TO TOWNS AND CITIES ADJACENT TO BATTLEFIELDS.

OPPOSERS ARGUE THE NEW WEAPONS WOULD LOWER THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD SINCE BATTLEFIELD COMMANDERS WOULD ASK TO BE ABLE TO EMPLOY THEM EARLIER THAN THEY WOULD THE MORE DESTRUCTIVE NUCLEAR ARTILLERY AND MISSILES.

THE ULTIMATE DECISION TO USE ANY NUCLEAR WEAPON RESTS WITH THE PRESIDENT.

THERE WAS SOME CONSTERNATION AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT BECAUSE OF THE SUDDEN WHITE HOUSE DECISION LAST WEEK

TO PULL BACK FROM THE NEUTRON PRODUCTION DISCUSSIONS.

A GREAT DEAL OF DIPLOMATIC EFFORT HAD GONE INTO
MOVING WEST GERMAN CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT AND
BRITISH PRIME MINISTER JAMES CALLAGHAN CLOSER TO
SPEAKING OUT IN SUPPORT OF PRODUCTION.

ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, A HIGH LEVEL CARTER AIDE
WILL GO TO EUROPE SOON TO EXPLAIN THE PRESIDENT'S
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NEW COURSE.

TO DATE, NO WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRY HAS APPROVED
THE NEUTRON WEAPONS. THE NETHERLANDS, THE ONLY
COUNTRY WHOSE PARLIAMENT VOTED ON THE ISSUE, RECENTLY
TURNED THEM DOWN.

THE SOVIET UNION, MEANWHILE, HAS TRIED TO MAKE THE
PROPOSED BUILDING OF NEUTRON WEAPONS BY THE UNITED
STATES AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE. THIS CAMPAIGN,
PICKED UP BY COMMUNIST PARTIES IN WESTERN EUROPEAN
COUNTRIES, HAS ADDED TO THE PROBLEMS OF NATO
POLITICAL LEADERS.

BECAUSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CONTROVERSY
THAT HAS DEVELOPED AROUND NEUTRON WEAPONS AND THE
PRESIDENT'S SEVEN-MONTH DELAY IN MAKING HIS PROMISED
PRODUCTION DECISION, WHITE HOUSE AND OTHER GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS ARE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ABOUT DISCUSSING
THE MATTER. YESTERDAY, FOR EXAMPLE, OFFICIALS
REPEATEDLY REQUESTED DURING INTERVIEWS THAT THEY NOT
BE QUOTED BY NAME OR EVEN AGENCY.

THERE WAS NO CONSENSUS ON HOW LONG THE CURRENT "HOLDING
PATTERN" WOULD HOLD.

"IT MIGHT BE TWO WEEKS, A MONTH OR LONGER," ONE
OFFICIAL CLOSE TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS SAID.

ANOTHER SUGGESTED MEETINGS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT
WILL TAKE UP "OTHER OPTIONS. WE MAY GO AHEAD WITH
PRODUCTION WITHOUT THE ALLIES' SUPPORT."

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UP TO NOW THAT COURSE HAS BEEN AVOIDED FOR SEVERAL
REASONS.

ONE IS THAT CONGRESS BYLAW HAS 45 DAYS TO VOTE BY JOINT RESOLUTION TO OVERTURN A DECISION TO BUILD THE WEAPONS.

OPPONENTS ON CAPITOL HILL COULD MAKE USE OF ALLIED FAILURE TO SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT AS A SIGN THAT CONGRESS SHOULD TURN AGAINST THE WEAPONS.

CARTER ALSO IS SAID TO WANT NATO SUPPORT BECAUSE OF THE UPCOMING UNITED NATIONS DEBATE ON DISARMAMENT, WHERE THE SOVIETS ARE BOUND TO CRITICIZE A MOVE TO NEUTRON SHELLS. THE PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY DOES NOT WANT TO STAND ALONE AMONG WORLD LEADERS IN FAVOR OF BUILDING NEUTRON WEAPONS. END TEXT.

3. BEGIN TEXT (UNCLASSIFIED): "NATO AGREEMENT ON NEUTRON BOMB EXPECTED SOON" BY RICHARD BURT.

WASHINGTON, MARCH 27 -- HIGH-RANKING CARTER ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SAID TODAY THAT THE WESTERN ALLIANCE WOULD SOON AGREE TO A PLAN THAT COULD ENABLE THE UNITED STATES TO BEGIN PRODUCING THE CONTROVERSIAL NEUTRON BOMB LATER THIS YEAR.

THE OFFICIALS SAID THAT THEY EXPECTED AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ALLIANCE EARLY NEXT MONTH DEALING BOTH WITH THE QUESTION OF AMERICAN PRODUCTION OF THE WEAPON AND ITS DEPLOYMENT IN WESTERN EUROPE. THEY SAID THAT AN ANNOUNCEMENT HAD BEEN SCHEDULED FOR EARLY LAST WEEK, BUT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD AT THE LAST MINUTE POSTPONED A CAREFULLY DEvised PLAN FOR MOVING AHEAD WITH THE BOMB.

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ALTHOUGH THE OFFICIALS DESCRIBED THE DELAY AS TEMPORARY, THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT HAD PROVOKED HEATED DEBATE WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION AND HAD COMPLICATED EFFORTS BY THE ALLIANCE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE SENSITIVE ISSUE.

STALEMATE CAUSES CONCERN

THE NEUTRON BOMB HAS BEEN AT THE CENTER OF A CONTROVERSY WITHIN THE ALLIANCE FOR OVER A YEAR, WITH NEITHER THE UNITED STATES NOR ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES WILLING

TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD APPROVING IT. ALTHOUGH THE WEAPON IS STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY DEFENSE OFFICIALS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC, MR. CARTER HAS

DECLARED HIMSELF UNWILLING TO BEGIN PRODUCING IT UNTIL ALLIED LEADERS AGREE THAT IT WILL BE DEPLOYED IN WESTERN EUROPE.

THESE LEADERS, FACING CRITICISM OF THE WEAPON AT HOME, HAVE INSISTED THAT MR. CARTER SHOULD FIRST ANNOUNCE A DECISION TO BEGIN PRODUCTION. THE WEAPON, WHICH ACHIEVES ITS DESTRUCTIVE EFFECT BY RELEASING INTENSE BURSTS OF RADIATION, WOULD BE DEPLOYED ON SHORT-RANGE MISSILES AND ARTILLERY IN EUROPE FOR USE MAINLY AGAINST ARMORED COLUMNS IN THE EVENT OF AN ATTACK BY THE SOVIET UNION.

THE STALEMATE HAS CREATED CONCERN AMONG SEVERAL RANKING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BECAUSE THEY SEE IT RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION'S LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE WESTERN ALLIANCE. OFFICIALS ALSO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIET UNION, IN UNDERTAKING AN INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO STOP THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE WEAPON, HAS TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THIS INDECISION.

AMERICAN OFFICIALS HAVE TRIED IN RECENT MONTHS TO PUT TOGETHER A COMPROMISE THAT WOULD ENABLE THE UNITED STATES TO BEGIN PRODUCING THE NEUTRON BOMB, LATER THIS YEAR. OFFICIALS SAID THAT EARLIER THIS MONTH AN AGREEMENT WAS REACHED AT THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION HEADQUARTERS IN BRUSSELS AND WAS TO BE ANNOUNCED AFTER A MEETING OF ALLIANCE REPRESENTATIVES SCHEDULED FOR LAST MONDAY.

HOWEVER, THE OFFICIALS SAID, MR. CARTER VOICED DOUBTS OVER THE COMPROMISE AND THE MEETING WAS POSTPONED, ALONG WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

OFFICIALS SAID THAT UNDER THE COMPROMISE THE UNITED STATES WOULD IMMEDIATELY BEGIN PRODUCING THE WEAPON, BUT ITS DEPLOYMENT IN EUROPE WOULD BE HELD UP FOR TWO YEARS WHILE THE ALLIANCE TESTED MOSCOW'S REACTION TO LIMITING THE NEUTRON BOMB IN RETURN FOR RESTRICTIONS ON A NEW SOVIET NUCLEAR SYSTEM, SUCH AS THE INTERMEDIATE-RANGE SS-20 MISSILE. IF THIS EFFORT AT

ARMS CONTROL FAILED, THE ALLIANCE COUNTRIES WOULD THEN ALLOW THE UNITED STATES TO BEGIN DEPLOYING THE NEUTRON BOMB ON THEIR TERRITORY.

WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS INDICATED THAT MR. CARTER'S DECISION NOT TO MOVE AHEAD WITH THE PLAN WAS BASED ON DOUBTS WHETHER THE ALLIED GOVERNMENTS WERE IN

FACT PREPARED TO ALLOW THE BOMB'S DEPLOYMENT IF
TALKS WITH MOSCOW FAILED. MR. CARTER, THEY SAID,
HAS ASKED FOR A STRONGER COMMITMENT FROM ALLIED
LEADERS ON THE QUESTION BEFORE HE APPROVES THE
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PLAN.

SOME OFFICIALS ARGUE THAT MR. CARTER'S DECISION
WAS CORRECT AND THAT THE WHITE HOUSE SHOULD SOON
RECEIVE THE ASSURANCES IT NEEDS TO UNDERTAKE
PRODUCTION OF THE BOMB.

HOWEVER, OTHER OFFICIALS SAY THAT IT MAY NOT BE
POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN PROMPTLY THE FIRM COMMITMENTS
THAT MR. CARTER SEEMS TO REQUIRE. POINTING
TO STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE NEUTRON BOMB VOICED
BY THE DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTER, CHRISTOPH VAN
DER KLAUW, LATE LAST WEEK, THESE OFFICIALS CONTEND
THAT THE NATO PLAN COULD NOW RAPIDLY FALL APART.
END TEXT.

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